

**AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC
ENGINEERING PLAQUING PROGRAMME**

**REPORT ON
THE UNVEILING CEREMONY OF
THE KINGSTON POWER STATION
HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER
SATURDAY, 4 APRIL 1998**



**ENGINEERING HERITAGE PANEL
CANBERRA DIVISION**

**KINGSTON POWER STATION
HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER PLAQUE
UNVEILING CEREMONY REPORT**



Introduction

In June 1997 Canberra Division of the Institution of Engineers, Australia (IEAust) nominated the Kingston Power Station in Wentworth Avenue, Canberra for the award of an Historic Engineering Marker under the Institution's **Australian Historic Engineering Plaquing Programme**.

The National Committee on Engineering Heritage advised of the approval of the nomination on 24 October 1997 and the plaque was unveiled at a ceremony held on Saturday 4 April 1998.

This is the report of that ceremony as required by the **Guide to The Australian Historic Engineering Plaquing Programme**, Page 21.

Planning

A small committee was formed to plan the unveiling ceremony. It comprised:

Robert Harvey	Chairman, Canberra Division Heritage Panel
Robert Breen	Member, Engineering Heritage Panel
Vesna Strika	Manager, Canberra Division.

At its first meeting on 20 February 1998 the following matters were considered:

- Time and place of ceremony
- Potential sponsors
- Officiating person
- Invitees
- Drafting, dispatch and RSVP of invitations
- Ceremony brochure
- Unveiling mechanism
- Catering
- Other facilities.

A site visit was made in conjunction with representatives of the Kingston Foreshore Development Authority (KFDA) who undertook to mount a display in the power station's main hall, on the day of the ceremony.

Arrangements

Following the inaugural meeting, matters needing to be put in place for the ceremony were progressively addressed and resolved. The date of Friday 3 April initially selected for the ceremony was amended to Saturday 4 April to suit the schedule of ACT Chief Minister Kate Carnell, who had agreed to perform the unveiling task (see letter at Attachment A).

A formal invitation was designed (see Attachment B), printed and dispatched by the end of February. 73 acceptances involving 97 people and 30 apologies were received.

The ceremony programme was designed and printed - see Attachment C.

Media notices were sent to local TV stations and the Canberra Times with a copy of the programme - a sample media release appears at Attachment D.

Catering was arranged with the Canberra Branch's usual supplier, the cost was met from Heritage Panel funds.

Preparation of the site was arranged with the owner, ACT Electricity and Water (ACTEW) Corporation.

The provision of a marquee for the comfort and protection of those attending was considered but rejected because of the rental charges involved and the predictably fine weather of the Canberra Autumn.

Sponsorship was limited to services in kind by the ACTEW and the Kingston Foreshore Development Authority.

Arrangements were made for the provision of seating for the expected attendance.

An Australian flag and IEAust banners were acquired for the ceremony site.

Experienced power station guide and narrator, Heritage Panel member Ken Haw was recruited to conduct tours of the station after the ceremony.

Vesna Strika undertook to produce a curtain veil with suitable mounting facilities, for the plaque.

Bob Harvey arranged with the ACTEW for the manufacture of a backing board and the mounting of the plaque in the agreed location in the entrance to the station.

Arrangements were made for the provision of a raised platform and lectern and a public address system was hired.

The Ceremony Day

As predicted the day turned out fine with the strength of the sun making hats and parasols highly desirable. Members of the organising committee and volunteers arrived at the ceremony site at about 9.00 AM to make preparations.

Notwithstanding the arrangements made prior to the day, some additional cleaning and arranging was required. It was also necessary to arrange the removal of ACTEW maintenance vehicles which remained in their normal parking area, close to the ceremony location.

The flag and banners were mounted and the chairs, speakers platform and lectern put in place. The caterers arrived and commenced setting up the light refreshments in the main hall of the station. The displays of the KFDA and the Engineering Heritage Panel had previously been mounted on screens surrounding the refreshment tables.

Difficulties were experienced with the plaque curtain mounting and actuation

mechanism but these were resolved in good time. The public address system - a small battery power unit with a cordless microphone - was set up and tested. Notice boards were placed in Wentworth Avenue, indicating the way to the power station and the ceremony. By the time the main body of the participants began arriving about 10.30 - 10.45 AM, all arrangements were in place. Guests were greeted by committee members and ushers and provided with ceremony programs. Members of the official party were welcomed by Heritage Panel Chairman Bob Harvey and Division Manager Vesna Strika.

The Unveiling Ceremony

Over 100 people attended the ceremony. Present were members of the official party, other members of the ACT Legislative Assembly, members and staff of the IEAust, representatives of local heritage and community groups, members of the Canberra Division and its Heritage Panel, past and present employees of the ACTEW and its predecessors, members of the National Committee on Engineering Heritage, persons associated with local tourism, members of interested professional organisations and many others. A list of acceptances and apologies is at Attachment E.

The ceremony followed closely the prepared program - Attachment C. Shortly after 11.00 AM Bob Harvey, as Master of Ceremonies, welcomed all attending and introduced the first speaker Bill Jordan, Chairman of the National Committee on Engineering Heritage, who described the Institution's historic engineering plaquing program.

John Neal, Acting President Canberra Division, then spoke on the history of the Kingston Power Station providing interesting highlights and anecdotes.

Bob Harvey introduced Kate Carnell, Chief Minister of the ACT, and invited her to unveil the plaque. Before doing so, Mrs Carnell spoke eloquently at length about the station, the engineering profession's contribution to society and the future plans for the precinct. The plaque was then unveiled with due ceremony and media coverage.

Closing remarks were then made by Paul Perkins, Deputy Chief Executive of the ACTEW Corporation. He spoke of the past, the present and the environment pointing out that past electricity generating practices would not be acceptable to today's environmentally-aware society.

Bob Harvey then invited those gathered to proceed upstairs for refreshments, to view the displays and to tour the station.

Media Coverage

Throughout the ceremony a TV crew recorded the proceedings and a short item appeared on that local station that evening. The next day **The Canberra Times** contained an item "Canberrans turn out to feel the power of the historic plant" - see Attachment F.

Photographic Coverage

Photographic coverage was provided by a **Canberra Times** photographer, by Canberra Division Manager Vesna Strika and by private persons. Samples

appear at Attachment G.

All photographs by the **Canberra Times** photographer are available for public access and will be held for future reference in the newspaper's archive facilities.

Post Ceremony Actions

Following the ceremony appropriate letters of thanks were dispatched.

The Historic Engineering Marker Plaque

The text of the Kingston Power Station Historic Engineering Marker plaque is shown on the ceremony program at Attachment C.

Public Risk Insurance

On the completion of the function, a lady guest half fell whilst descending the power station stairs, suffering a distressing-if-not-serious cut to her leg. The matter was satisfactorily settled under the ACTEW public risk insurance policy.

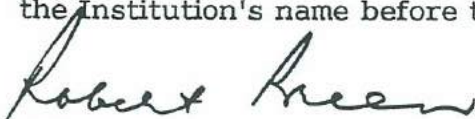
The incident highlighted the need to ensure that public functions such as historic plaque unveiling ceremonies must have adequate public risk insurance.

Ceremony an Outstanding Success

There is no doubt that the Kingston Power Station HEM plaque unveiling ceremony was a great success because:

- the weather was ideal, the event was very well attended and everyone seemed in a festive mood;
- a very high profile person - the ACT Chief Minister - performed the unveiling;
- apart from some minor annoyances all arrangements ran smoothly on the day;
- the Institution, the Canberra Division and the engineering profession received positive image boosts with the public at large and in particular politicians, government officials and heritage and community groups.

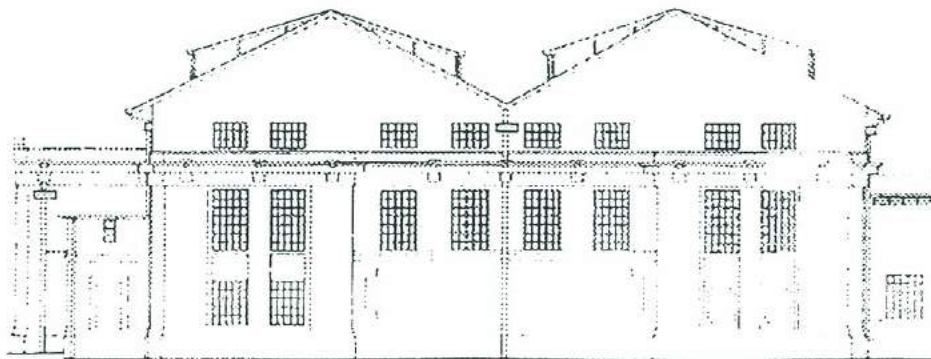
Once again the IEAust's **Historic Engineering Plaquing Programme** has, besides providing deserved public recognition for an historic engineering site, placed the Institution's name before the public at a particular location, "forever"!



Robert Breen
Nomination Coordinator

September 1998

- Attachments:**
- A Kate Carnell letter dated 20 April 1998.
 - B Formal invitation to the Unveiling Ceremony.
 - C Unveiling Ceremony Program.
 - D Sample Media Release.
 - E List of Acceptances and Apologies.
 - F **Sunday Times** April 5 1998 article "Canberrans turn out to feel the power of historic plant".
 - G Ceremony photographs.
 - H Suggested entry in **The Historic Engineering Plaques of Australia** booklet.



Kingston Power House South-West Elevation

Drawing source: John Trajkovski & Marion Mahoney, Griffin Measured Drawing Competition, 1992.



Kate Carnell

Chief Minister
Australian Capital Territory

Ms Vesna Strika
Manager
Canberra Division
The Institution of Engineers Australia
PO Box E66
KINGSTON ACT 2604

Vesna
Dear Ms Strika

Thank you for inviting me to unveil the historic engineering marker plaque at the Kingston Power Station on Saturday 4 April 1998.

Engineers have played an important part in the development of Canberra. I was delighted to be invited to unveil this plaque in recognition of their contributions.

Again, thank you for your invitation.

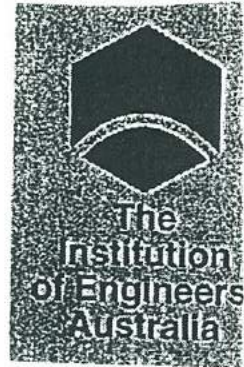
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Kate Carnell'.

Kate Carnell MLA
Chief Minister

20 APR 1998

FACSIMILE



CANBERRA DIVISION

TO: Canberra Times

FAX No: 62802282

FROM: _____

SUBJECT: _____

TOTAL No PAGES: 3

Media Release

Unveiling of Historic Engineering Marker At Kingston Power Station by Chief Minister Kate Carnell

Time: Today, 4 April 1998 at 11.00 am at Kingston Power Station,
Wentworth Ave, Kingston.

See attached program for further details.

For further information please contact:

Vesna Strika
Manager, Canberra Division
Mobile: 041 9498923
PH: 6258 6793

**KINGSTON POWER STATION
HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER PLAQUE
UNVEILING CEREMONY**

LIST OF ACCEPTANCES AND APOLOGIES

ACCEPTANCES

Politicians

Kate Carnell, ACT Chief Minister	Harold Hird MLA
Simon Cordell MLA	Dave Rugendyke MLA
Bill Wood MLA	
Senator Margaret Reid, Senator for the ACT	

Australian Government Officials

Air Marshall David Evans, Chairman, National Capital Authority
Rod Grosse, Chief Executive, National Capital Authority
Helen Peale, National Trust

ACT Government Officials

Dr Colin Adam, Dept of Urban Services
Annabelle Pegruim, Chief Executive, Dept of Business, Arts, Sport and Tourism
John Feint, Assistant Manager, ACT Heritage
Rod Gilmour, Chief Executive, Dept of Urban Services

ACTEW Corporation

Jim Service, Chairman
Paul Wright, General Manager Services
Alan Galbraith, Chief Engineer
Bob Gibbs, General Manager Operations
Paul and Judy Perkins

Canberra Division Members

John and Mrs Neal, Acting President	
Bob and Tonina Harvey, Chairman, Engineering Heritage Panel	
Vesna Strika	Barbara and Graeme Lowe
Byrne Kenny	Ken and Mrs Haw
Keith and Judy Baker	Ross McIntyre
Tom Lawrence	Robert Breen
Shahrokh Vaziri	

IEAust National Groups and Office Staff

Bill Jordan, National Committee on Engineering Heritage
David Hood Peter Walker and Partner

Canberra Community Groups, Businesses and Organisations

Robert Irwin, Kingston Precinct Community Group
Eric Martin, ACT Heritage Council
Winnifred Rosser and Partner, ACT Heritage Council
John Feint ACT Heritage Council

Simon Grose, Canberra Times

Kathryn Maxwell, Conservation Council of the South-East Region & Canberra

Former Employees, Canberra Electricity Supply

Dennis Taylor and Partner
Tom Ford and Partner
Bob Crawford and Partner
Ross Rowe
Mick Ozerskis
Gordon Smith and Partner
Barry Suthern
Frank Dunshea and Partner
Don Thomas and Partner
Gerry McClusky
Horrie Staunton
Ron Mayo and Partner

Stan Goodhew
Barney McHugh
Steve Pala and Partner
Ken Kaye and Partner
John Carson
Ron Edwards and Partner
Trevor Mulach
John Bray
Jake Zutt and Partner
Tony Szalankiewicz
Harry Scheele and Partner
Alan Bradley

ACT Citizens

Bert Sheedy and Partner
Bede and Gary Tongs
Val Emerton
Ted Duff
Brad Dobson
Vicky Jones and Partner
John Hargraves

Mrs Luker
Sir John Overall
Ann Gugler
Grace Jones and Partner
Magaret Hindres
Frank McGrath
John Slater

APOLOGIES

Politicians

Bill Stefaniak, MLA
Wayne Berry, MLA
Garry Humphries, MLA
Michael Moore, MLA
Peter Cochrane, Member for Monaro

Australian Government Officials

Dianne Gayler, Dept of Environment, Sport and Territories

ACT Government Officials

Meredith Whitten, Chief Minister's Office
David Marshall, ACT Tourism
Dianne Gayler
Julie McKinnon, DAS Domestic Property Group

ACTEW Corporation

John Mackay, Chief Executive
Gillian Field

Canberra Division Members

Charles Guscott

Bill Bolton

IEAust National Groups and Office Staff

Barry Grear, President, IEAust

John Kemp, National Office Staff

Styve Taylor, National Office Staff

Ken Wyatt, NCEH

Canberra Community Groups, Businesses and Organisations

John Cusack, Kingston Precinct Community Group

Rod Pahl, Burson-Marsteller Pty Ltd

Former Employees, Canberra Electricity Supply

Rodney Hurley

Jim Mundy

Peter Noffke

ACT Citizens

Dr Eric Wilmott

Others

Paula Mathewson, Assistant Director, ESAA

Peter Dalkin, Australian Gas Association

Michael Peck, Royal Institute of Architects

Hugh Percy, General Manager, Queanbeyan Shire Council

Barry Simon

Peter Jamison

Linton Hawkins

SUNDAY TIMES APRIL 5 1998

Canberrans turn out to feel the power of historic plant



Former fireman and turbine driver Mick Ozerskis, 77, takes the welcome opportunity to look over his old work place yesterday.

By Verona Burgess

The Kingston Power Station, once the lifeblood of the developing national capital city, is not usually the first stop for the average tourist visiting Canberra.

But at last the building which was on hand to give power to the people for 47 years seems to be finding its proper place in Canberra's history.

When it was built in 1913, it was Canberra's first permanent public building and first engineering work.

More importantly, it was the hub of the community's infrastructure because Canberra was designed as a state-of-the-art, all-electric city at a time when the technology was in its infancy in Australia. And it was the Institution of Engineers which celebrated the old power house in style yesterday with the unveiling of a new plaque dedicating it as a "Historic Engineering Marker".

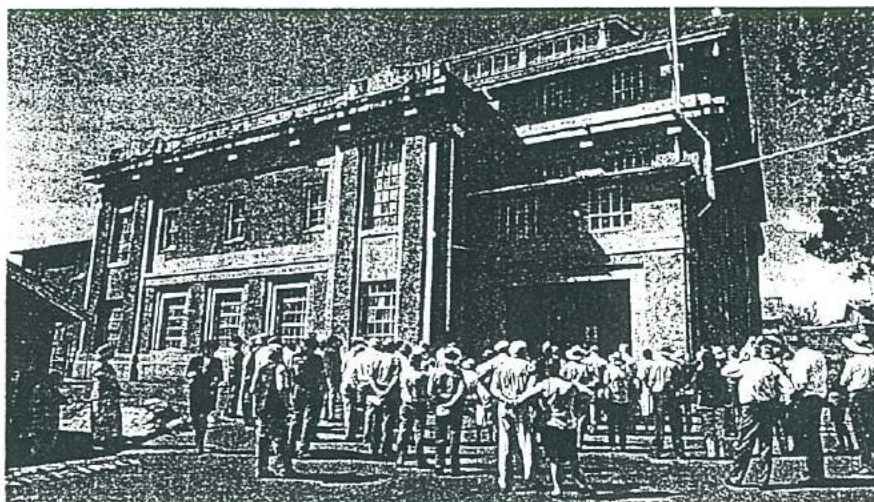
The plaque is part of a national plaque designation program established to bring public attention to significant historic engineering works and the engineers who created them.

The engineers say that in many ways the power station symbolises the contribution made by engineers to the establishment and development of the capital.

At the time of completion, it was considered the most modern power station in Australia, although it was soon overtaken by advancing technology.

The building was designed by a dour Scottish architect John

Institute honours a feat of engineering



Yesterday's crowd admires the Kingston Power Station, Canberra's first work of engineering.

Smith Murdoch, who afterwards became chief architect of the Department of Works and Railways. He also designed the old Parli-

ament House, Telopea Park School, Mt Stromlo Observatory, the Hyatt Hotel Canberra and a host of other buildings that stamped on

Canberra the so-called "Federal Capital" style of architecture.

In the early days the Kingston Power Station had significance as

Photograph by Gary Schafer

a permanent landmark in the small Canberra community.

Its steam whistle regulated the working day and its lights provided a beacon for those returning home from the town of Queanbeyan late at night. It powered the houses of the few early residents and lit the sparse streets. Power from the station also enabled a dependable water supply to be pumped from the Cotter Dam.

Although it was displaced as the prime supplier of power to the ACT in 1929, when cheaper NSW hydro-electricity from Burinjuck Dam became available, it remained a valuable stand-by power source until 1937, when it was decommissioned.

Fortunately, the Kingston Power Station has survived the rush to develop Canberra, partly by default because for decades it was not in a fashionable area and developers apparently did not recognise its money-making potential.

Its architectural value has long been recognised and it will remain a notable part of the Lake Burley Griffin landscape in the redevelopment of the Kingston Foreshore precinct — a lasting symbol of the contribution of engineering to the planning and building of the city.

The plaque was unveiled yesterday by the Chief Minister, Kate Carnell, who was welcomed by the chairman of the Engineering Heritage Panel, Bob Harvey, the chairman of the National Committee on Engineering Heritage, Bill Jordan, and the acting president of the Institute's Canberra division, John Neal.

CEREMONY PHOTOGRAPHS



The ceremony audience assembles, ...



Engineering Heritage Panel Chairman Bob Harvey opens proceedings and introduces ...



Bill Jordan, Chairman of the National Committee on Engineering Heritage who explains the IEAust's historic engineering plaquing programme.



The history of the Kingston Power Station is described by John Neal, Acting Chairman of the IEAust's Canberra Division.



Chief Minister Kate Carnell speaks of the contribution of engineering to society and of future plans for the Kingston precinct.



She then unveils the Historic Engineering Marker plaque and is ...



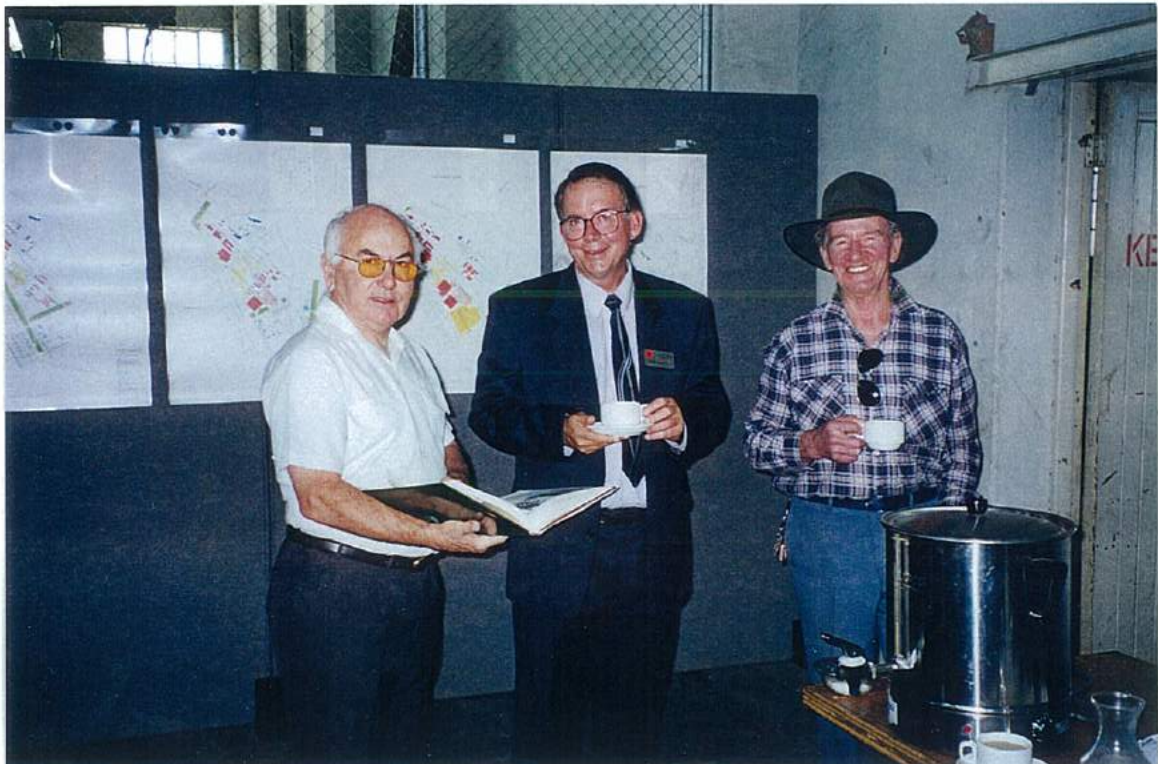
thanked by Bob Harvey.



Closing remarks are made by Paul Jenkins, Deputy Chief Executive, ACTEW Corporation.



After the ceremony Ken Haw (right) conducts tours of the station whilst ...



others enjoy refreshments, inspect displays (rear) or discuss the Heritage Panel's book "Canberra's Engineering Heritage".

Kingston Power Station

location: Wentworth Avenue, Kingston, Australian Capital Territory
 owner: Act Electricity and Water Corporation

the plaque:

type: **Historic Engineering Marker**

location: On the wall adjacent to main entrance at the south-west corner of the building.

The Kingston Power Station was the first permanent building constructed in the National Capital. It is a symbol of the far-sighted view of the capital's founders in that they opted for it to be all-electric when use of the technology was in its infancy in Australia. It played a major part in the development of the National Capital by providing for electrical requirements during construction, a permanent general electricity supply and power for the water supply system. At the time of the station's completion it was considered the most modern in Australia but such was the rate of advancement of the technology, it soon became outdated.

In the early days the station had significance to the small Canberra community as a permanent landmark. Its steam whistle regulated the working day of the citizens and its lights provided a beacon for those returning home from the town of Queanbeyan late at night. It powered the houses of the few early residents and lit the sparse streets of the embryo capital.

Although displaced as the prime supplier of power to the Act by cheaper New South Wales hydro-electricity from Burrinjuck Dam in 1929, the powerhouse remained a valuable source of stand-by power until 1957 when it was decommissioned.

With the development of the Kingston Foreshore Precinct, the Kingston Power Station will remain a significant part of the Lake Burley Griffin landscape and continue to stand as a symbol of the contribution of engineering to the planning and building of Canberra.

plaque text:

The Kingston Power Station

Designed for the Federal Government's Department of Home Affairs and completed in 1915, this power station was the first permanent building constructed in the National Capital. It was a valuable source of prime and stand-by electric power for the Australian Capital Territory and the New South Wales electricity grid for 47 years. It symbolises the contribution of engineering to the building and development of the National Capital and is an important part of the city's heritage.

Dedicated by the Institution of Engineers, Australia 1998